

Public Comment Sought on Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan

Contact: John Lerg

Agencies: Michigan and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources

Michigan and Indiana Department of Natural Resources officials jointly announced today (February 20, 2007) that they are seeking public comment in the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan for the federally endangered Mitchell's satyr butterfly.

In southern Michigan and northern Indiana, the Mitchell's satyr lives in fens or localized wetland habitats with a mix of herbaceous and woody plants. Many of these fens have been drained or otherwise degraded in recent decades, and the resulting loss of habitat has imperiled this butterfly. The vision for this plan is to provide habitat for this butterfly by restoring and managing fens in both Michigan and Indiana.

Carrie Tansy, Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service at Michigan's East Lansing Field Office reports, "The Mitchell's satyr is one of the most imperiled butterflies in the world, and its demise can be attributed largely to loss of habitat."

In seeking public comment, the Departments are particularly interested in identifying issues, concerns, and opportunities associated with development of a two-state Habitat Conservation Plan. The Departments would like to also identify any other associated environmental factors and effects on the environment as a result of implementing the Plan.

The Departments will host three public meetings in addition to accepting written comments. These meetings will consist of a short presentation followed by an opportunity for questions and input on the plan. Written comments may be sent to the Plainwell Operations Service Center, 621 N. 10th St., Plainwell, MI 49080 or they can be emailed to LergJ@Michigan.gov. Public comments received by April 15, 2007 will be incorporated into the plan concept, but comments at any time are appreciated and incorporated into plan development.

Public meetings will be held on:

- March 3, 2007 from 2 pm to 4 pm at the Liberty Township Hall in Jackson County, 101 W. Liberty Rd., Clark Lake, MI 49234
- March 6, 2007 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Kalamazoo Nature Center, 7000 N. Westnedge, Kalamazoo, MI 49009
- March 10, 2007 from 1 pm to 3 pm at the Fremont Public Library, 1004 W. Toledo St., Fremont, IN 46737

Individuals attending these meetings are requested to refrain from using heavily-scented personal care products, in order to enhance accessibility for everyone.

Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for the meetings hosted in Michigan should contact John Lerg 269-685-6851, ext. 147 a minimum of five (5) business days before these meetings. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for the meeting hosted in Indiana should contact Ric Edwards 317-232-4145 a minimum of five (5) business days before that meeting. Requests made LESS THAN FIVE (5) BUSINESS DAYS BEFORE THESE EVENTS may not be accommodated.